

Kerr #5 - 399

year that Korth was there—that you recall? Of course, the biggest event of the year was the missile crisis in October. Was the Secretary's office involved in the missile crisis?

Captain Kerr: Well, yes, only to the extent that McNamara asked the Secretary to supply people for a meeting from the JAG's office and his office who might be able to come up with some ideas or some definitions or to add to the discussion regarding whether or not there should be a blockade.* At that time some naval action was indicated. I went to that meeting and a lot was kicked around about whether a blockade was an act of war or whether a blockade was indicated at this time. Definitions of blockade were kicked around. Somebody at the meeting came up with the idea of coining the expression "quarantine," which later was adopted, which of course had no legal precedent, but which did the trick. But other than that, of course, there were the operational features of setting up the quarantine and the destroyers out there and the approach of the Russian ships and the drama in flag plot when—I thought it was McNamara, but it may well have been one of McNamara's chief assistants was denied access to flag plot on the basis that this was purely a naval exercise and that civilian intrusion was not only not welcome but not permitted, which I believe played a very, very important part in Admiral Anderson's dismissal. Also, as I recall now, the week after that, Admiral Anderson's picture

*JAG—Judge Advocate General.

Copy to: Alex A. Kerr, U.S. Navy, 24 January 1984

appeared on the cover of Time magazine.* I'm told that this also enraged Kennedy, because this was Kennedy's great moment of triumph of his entire administration, and to have a picture of an admiral on the cover of Time magazine to commemorate the event was sure to have rubbed him the wrong way.

Q: Did Korth ever confide in you his feelings about the CNO?

Captain Kerr: No, until the very end when Admiral Anderson finally testified before the McClellan Committee, Admiral Anderson himself had presented a picture of pretty well staying aloof of the TFX controversy. OP-03 and OP-05 and others were very much involved, but Admiral Anderson stayed out of it in the day-to-day issues, although the source selection people in BuWeps were not very much involved and Ike Kidd was very much involved.** And so when the time came for Admiral Anderson to testify before the McClellan Committee, Secretary Korth asked to see a copy of his statement, and Admiral Anderson did not make it available. He stalled on it and eventually, in effect, refused to make it available, and then testified at the McClellan Committee hearings in a manner diametrically opposed to the position taken by the Secretary of the Navy. And Korth was extremely upset

*A painting of Admiral Anderson appeared on the cover of the 2 November 1962 issue of Time. Inside the magazine was a flattering article about him, telling of the voice call sign "Fast Charger" the admiral had had as Commander Sixth Fleet. The article indicated it was an apt description of Admiral Anderson himself.

**Captain Isaac C. Kidd, Jr., USN, executive assistant to the Chief of Naval Operations.

about that. I think he was by far more upset by Anderson's refusal to show him the testimony ahead of time than he was about the actual testimony. He assumed, I think, by this time, that Anderson would take a position that it would not be compatible with his own. He felt about that, well, so be it. That was going to be it. But the refusal to show him the testimony ahead of time, which was a normal procedure, aggravated him tremendously. And from then on, I think the relationship was at rock bottom. Korth was always a gentleman, but you'd have to know him to know how aggravated and how upset and how deep the breach had gone, but we knew it.

Q: Were you involved when he was casting about to get a successor before he had even fired Admiral Anderson? This is when Admiral McDonald was sounded out over in Europe.*

Captain Kerr: No, I don't remember that, Paul. I think we all assumed that Admiral Anderson's days were numbered. As I said, I felt that it was primarily because of Kennedy's unhappiness with him in the missile crisis and only secondarily on the TFX, because Kennedy had not involved himself that much in TFX, and there were several layers in between. A fight between the Chief of Naval Operations and the Secretary of the Navy, who by this time had only sub-Cabinet rank, is

*Admiral David L. McDonald, USN, was Commander in Chief U.S. Naval Forces Europe. He became Chief of Naval Operations on 1 August 1963. Admiral Anderson served one two-year term as CNO, whereas it had been customary for CNOs to serve longer than two years.